

CUP 21 g. 35/34

ASSOCIATION
FOR PRESERVING
LIBERTY AND PROPERTY
AGAINST
REPUBLICANS AND LEVELLERS.

At a MEETING of GENTLEMEN at the CROWN
AND ANCHOR TAVERN, November 20, 1792,

JOHN REEVES, Esq. in the Chair,

The following CONSIDERATIONS and RESOLUTIONS were entered
into and agreed upon :

CONSIDERING the danger to which the Public Peace and Order are exposed by the circulating of mischievous Opinions, founded upon plausible but false reasoning ; and that this circulation is principally carried on by the industry of Clubs and Societies of various denominations in many parts of the Kingdom :

It appears to us, That it is now become the duty of all Persons, who wish well to their Native Country, to endeavour, in their several neighbourhoods, to prevent the bad effects of such mischievous industry ; and that it would greatly tend to promote these good endeavours, if Societies were formed in different parts of the Kingdom, whose object should be to support the Laws, to suppress seditious Publications, and to defend our Persons and Property against the innovations and depredations that seem to be threatened by those who maintain the mischievous opinions before alluded to.

These opinions are conveyed in the terms—*the Rights of Man—Liberty and Equality—No King—No Parliament*—and others of the like import ; all of them, in the sense imposed on them, expressing sentiments in direct opposition to the Laws of this Land, and some of them such as are inconsistent with the well-being of Society under any laws whatsoever.

It appears to us, the tendency of these Opinions is, that we are voluntarily to surrender every thing we now possess ; our Religion and our Laws ; our civil Government and Civil Society ; and that we are to trust to the formation of something New, upon the principles of Equality, and under the auspices of speculative men, who have conceived ideas of perfection that never yet were known in the World : And it appears, that the Missionaries of this Sect are aiming at effecting the Overthrow of the present System of Government and Society, by infusing into the minds of ignorant men causes of discontent adapted to their various stations ; some of which causes are wholly imaginary, and the rest are such as inseparably belong to civil life ; have existed, and ever will exist, under all Forms of Government ; cannot be removed by any change, and will be aggravated and multiplied, a hundred fold, by the change proposed.

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It appears from History and Observation, that the inequality of rank and fortune in this happy Country, is more the result of every man's own exertions, than of any controuling institution of the State. Men become great, who have greatly distinguished themselves by the application of talents natural or acquired. Men become rich, who have persevered with industry in the application to Trade and Commerce, to Manufactures, and other useful employments. How many persons now of great rank and fortune, who were born without either! How many rich Merchants and Traders who begun their career in the lowest employments of the shop and counting-house!

In the progress to this advancement they have all, in their stations, contributed their share toward the flow of opulence, both public and private, which is to be seen in every part of this Island. It is by the effects of this industry, that the Gentleman is enabled to support his rank and station; and the Merchant and Tradesman to employ his Clerks, Journeymen, and Apprentices. Hence comes the price of the Farmer's corn, and the wages of Servants of every description. By this happy *Inequality*, and dependence of one man on another, employment is found for all, in their several vocations to which they have been called by design or accident. This Inequality and dependence is so infinitely diversified in this country, that there is no place upon earth where there are so many ways, in which a man by his talents and industry may raise himself above his equals. This has hitherto been thought a pre-eminent happiness that was peculiar to ourselves, and ought to be cherished: it has been ascribed to the protecting influence which Property has always enjoyed under equal Laws; and it has increased of late years in a wonderful degree, by the prosperity which was caused, and can only be continued by the same influence.

We are, upon the fullest deliberation, of opinion, that proposing to pull down this goodly fabric, which has been gradually reared by the successive virtue and industry of all the great and good men who have lived in this Island for centuries, and to submit to begin afresh upon a new system of *Equality*, as it is called, seems a proposition that can be suggested only by the most undisguised wickedness, and entertained by the grossest folly.

Because, if so wild a plan was to be carried into execution, and all men were made equal, they would from that moment begin to struggle, who should first rise above his equals; and it is beyond all question, if there was any industry, or any virtue; if there was peace, and public prosperity; if there was private happiness and public, in such new-formed Society, there would gradually arise an Inequality of Rank and Fortune.

We foresee, from recent experiment in a neighbouring country, that in the operation of bringing to pass such a transition, the lives and properties of all persons in this Island would be exposed to the arbitrary disposal of self-opinionated Philosophers, and a wild and needy Mob, deluded and instigated by them; that with the introduction of Equality in Rank and Fortune, an expectation would be raised in the Lower Orders, which must first be gratified with plunder, and afterwards would sink into a state of disappointment and abject poverty. When all were equalized, there would no longer be a superfluity to pay the hire of Servants, or purchase the productions of Art or Manufacture; no Commerce, no Credit; no resource for the active, but in robbery, and in all those public disorders which make life miserable. Thus would the present generation be certainly ruined; that which is to follow could not propose to itself a remedy, but in pursuing the same Arts of Peace which had been so capriciously abandoned; and the more they prospered in that pursuit, the more they would contribute to reproduce the Inequality which had been before condemned and exploded.—Where then are the Blessings of this Reform, and to what purpose is misery to be brought on the present Generation?

It is with grief we see that in a neighbouring country the carrying into practice of this wild doctrine of *Equality* and *the Rights of Man*, has already produced these evils, and others ten thousand times greater. It is not yet publicly known, nor can it enter into the gentle heart of a BRITON to conceive, the number of atrocious crimes against God and Man, that have been committed in support of these opinions. Murders and assassinations have been deliberately planned, and justified by some of these pretended philosophers, as the means to attain their ends of reform. With all their pretences and promises, they have proceeded to violate every



every right, Civil and Natural, that should have been observed towards their Equals;—the people, who have only changed their masters, groan under new tyrannies of which they never heard or dreamed; and are subjected to the chastisement of one desperate leader after another. The excesses of these ruffian Demagogues have no bounds; they have already surpassed the wildest phrenzies of Fanaticism, Superstition, and Enthusiasm; plundering and murdering at home, and propagating their opinions by the sword in foreign countries;—imposture, fallacy, falsehood, and bloodshed;—their philosophy is the idle talk of Schoolboys; and their actions are the savage ferocity of wild beasts.

Such are the *new lights* and the *false philosophy* of our pretended Reformers; and such the effects they have produced, where, alone, they have unfortunately been tried. But, however these poor pretences may have imposed on the understandings of men, in a neighbouring country, bred in ignorance, oppression, and poverty, they can have no influence on the good sense and gravity of Britons, who have been used to the enjoyment of true Liberty, and every day feel the blessings of abundance derived from a productive industry, protected by Equal Laws, and a free Government. It is well known, that those who are virtuous and honest have many more means of acquiring ease and comfort, wealth and distinction, and in a superior degree, in this country than in any other;—it is well known, that we already possess, and have long possessed, really and truly That which the pretended Reformers would persuade ignorant people *they* alone can bestow. It has been the pride of BRITONS to boast of their *Liberty* and *Property*; and although these visionary Reformers have chosen to substitute the notion of *Equality* in the place of the latter, it is trusted there are enough who know too well the value of their *Property*, acquired under the influence of true *Liberty*, to surrender it in exchange for an empty name. It is well known, and we feel it daily, that we have as much of these pretended new inventions, as is necessary and convenient for a well-ordered Society. Every one has all the *Rights of Man* that leave him at liberty to do good to himself and his neighbour, and (what is worth considering) to protect his person and property against open or secret plunderers. He has as much of *Equality* as one man can possess without diminishing the *Equality* of his neighbour. We are told by our Religion (for *We* have a Religion), that we are *to do unto all men as we would that men should do unto us*; and this is realized to us by the firm administration of the Law; which suffers no injury to go without a remedy, and affords a remedy equally to the proudest and the poorest.

Such are *The Rights of Man*; such *The Liberty and Equality* which we have long enjoyed; under these we have lived and prospered, both in public and private, beyond the example of any country; and to maintain them, as they are, unimpaired by the fancies of Pedant-Politicians, or the rude hands of Ruffian Levellers, every TRUE BRITON ought to shed his blood.

Impressed with these sentiments in favour of our happy Establishment, and alarmed by the mischievous endeavours, that are now using by wicked men, to mislead the uninformed, and to spirit up the discontented by furnishing them with plausible topics, tending to the subversion of the State, and incompatible with all Government whatsoever:

We do, as private men, unconnected with any Party or description of persons at home, taking no concern in the struggles at this moment making abroad, but most seriously anxious to preserve the true Liberty, and unexampled prosperity we happily enjoy in this kingdom, think it expedient and necessary to form ourselves into an ASSOCIATION for the purpose of discouraging, in every way that lies in our power, the progress of such nefarious designs as are meditated by the wicked and senseless Reformers of the present time; and we do hereby resolve, and declare as follows:

FIRST—That the persons present at this Meeting do become a Society for discouraging and suppressing Seditious Publications, tending to disturb the Peace of this Kingdom, and for supporting a due execution of the Laws made for the protection of persons and property.

SECONDLY—That this Society do use its best endeavours occasionally to explain those topics of public discussion which have been so perverted by evil-designing men, and to shew, by irrefragable proof, that they are not applicable to the State of this Country, that they can produce no good, and certainly must produce great evil.

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THIRDLY—That this Society will receive with great thanks all communications that shall be made to it for the above purposes.

FOURTHLY—That it be recommended to all those, who are friends to the Established Law, and to peaceable Society, to form themselves, in their different neighbourhoods, into similar Societies for promoting the same laudable purposes.

FIFTHLY—That this Society do meet at this place or elsewhere, every **TUESDAY, THURSDAY, and SATURDAY.**

SIXTHLY—That these Considerations and Resolutions be printed in all the public Papers, and otherwise circulated into all parts of the Kingdom.

By Order of the SOCIETY,

J. MOORE, *Secretary.*

N. B. All Letters and Communications are requested to be addressed to the Secretary at this place.

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